

where people will see all the particulars. If I tried to review every particular in the budget, I would set the all-time record for the amount of time in front of the Congress. And as you know, I'm the kind of person who likes to try to get to the point. I will spend enough time speaking so that people will understand where I'm coming from but not too long so they go to sleep.

Q. Mr. President, you've acknowledged that you're going to have to make cuts to the budget to some extent. What do you say to those who are saying that you're telling the American people, essentially, they can have their cake and eat it, too?

The President. What I'm going to say to the American people is that, had we kept spending at the rate we were spending last year, there would be no surplus, that the size of growth in the Federal budget that—and the budget we inherited was way too high, that we can meet our needs by slowing down the rate of growth in our budget. But it requires a President to set priorities. And I'm going to set clear priorities in the budget.

I readily concede some appropriators may not like the fact that we're asking for there to be fiscal sanity in the Federal budget, but that's one of the reasons I became the President, because I said, "Give us a chance, and we will have fiscal sanity in our budget." And I'll look forward to making the case.

The people are going to hear in plain spoken words why I believe, strongly believe, when we meet priorities, pay down debt, protect Social Security, and as importantly, make sure that people get some of their own money back so to make sure that the economy is strong, help people pay for high energy bills, to help people manage their own personal debt, we need to have tax relief—tax relief that the people can feel. And I will make the case tomorrow night that it's within our grasp to do so. And people will hear as plainly as I can say it what the facts are.

Q. It sounds like your speech will be shorter than ones we're used to in the last 8 years. *[Laughter]*

The President. I don't know. *[Laughter]* It depends on how loud you clap.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:07 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. A tape was

not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Proclamation 7408—American Red Cross Month, 2001

February 26, 2001

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The American Red Cross was founded in 1881 by Clara Barton, a woman selflessly devoted to the needs of humanity. Many of the Red Cross's guiding principles—compassion, courage, character, and civic duty—are timeless ideals shared by the people of the United States.

Chartered and authorized by the Congress to act in times of need, the American Red Cross serves our Nation and the world, providing compassionate assistance to people afflicted by personal, local, national, or international disasters. Every day, millions of Red Cross volunteers and employees follow in Clara Barton's footsteps by providing essential services to people in their communities.

For more than 120 years, Americans have relied on the expertise of the American Red Cross in disaster relief. Last year, the Red Cross helped people during devastating wildfires in New Mexico and Montana and in communities hit by massive ice storms in Nebraska, Arkansas, and across the Midwest. Volunteers respond to an estimated 63,000 disasters each year and help millions of people during trying times of loss. The American Red Cross also saves lives long before tragedy strikes by helping individuals and entire communities learn to prepare for disasters.

The educational information distributed by the American Red Cross helps people feel safe at home, at work, at school, and at play. Last year, the Red Cross trained nearly 12 million people in lifesaving CPR and first aid, in the use of automated external defibrillators (AEDS), on HIV/AIDS education, and in lifeguarding and water safety. Many people also know about the Red Cross because of the organization's blood collection drives. In 2000, more than 6.3 million units of blood were collected from 4 million generous blood donors.

Under its charter, the American Red Cross is entrusted to deliver emergency messages and provide vital services for military members and their families. Staff members deploy with our Armed Forces to provide emergency communications and a caring presence to service men and women separated from their families. Almost 40,000 Red Cross volunteers work at more than 100 military sites here and around the world.

Through the years, the American Red Cross has reached out to people worldwide, preventing and relieving the most desperate cases of human suffering caused by crises abroad. For families in need right now—in more than 50 developing nations—the American Red Cross is helping to establish sanitary and healthy living conditions by creating reliable sources of food and water. The organization's international services save the lives of people threatened by calamities such as epidemics, natural disasters, armed conflict, deadly weather, social strife, or economic collapse.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America and Honorary Chairman of the American Red Cross, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 2001 as American Red Cross Month. I request, as my predecessor Franklin Roosevelt did 58 years ago, that each American enlist in the Red Cross “army of mercy”—and give part of themselves to advance this organization's noble humanitarian mission. We have a long way yet to travel, but together, we can save lives. On behalf of a grateful Nation, we applaud and salute the selfless dedication of generations of Red Crossers.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-sixth day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fifth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., February 28, 2001]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 1.

Proclamation 7409—Irish-American Heritage Month, 2001

February 26, 2001

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Beginning from the earliest years of settlement, millions of Ireland's people have emigrated to America's shores. This immigration reached a particular peak during the terrible years of the Great Famine more than 150 years ago. Irish immigrants, from professionals to laborers, made an enormous contribution to the building of our Nation.

The Irish who came to America endured many hardships but have prevailed to play vital roles in every chapter of our country's history. Nine of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were of Irish origin, and 19 Presidents of the United States have proudly claimed Irish heritage—including George Washington, Andrew Jackson, John F. Kennedy, and Ronald Reagan. Irish Americans have served with distinction in every war this Nation has fought, from Revolutionaries John Barry and Stephen Moylan to General Douglas MacArthur. Other influential and renowned figures of Irish descent include pioneers Buffalo Bill Cody, Daniel Boone, and Davy Crockett; authors Flannery O'Connor, Eugene O'Neill, and John O'Hara; Civil War photographer Matthew Brady; and entertainers Jackie Gleason, Gene Kelly, and John Wayne. These distinguished Americans represent only a small sampling of the men and women whose legacy has forever changed our national identity and who trace their ancestry to Ireland's green shores.

Today, the more than 44 million Americans who claim Irish heritage look back with pride on the achievements and contributions of their forebears. Irish Americans have distinguished themselves in every sector of American life. We are all enriched, strengthened, and blessed by their service to our country.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United